

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 4676

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, MILI, LE, IS
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: LEBANESE REQUEST FOR STANDSTILL

1. FONMIN BOUTROS ASKED ME TO MEET HIM AT MY RESIDENCE UP IN YARZE AT 1300 LOCAL AUGUST 11. HE WISHED HAVE MEETING WHICH WOULD NOT BE REPORTED BY PRESS. BRIEFLY, HE SAID LEBANESE WANTED BREATHING SPACE BEFORE DECIDING WHAT TO DO WITH FORCE AT KAWKABA. IT WAS TOO EARLY TO WITHDRAW IT, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE MAKING SOME MINOR REDEPLOYMENTS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA. BEFORE DECIDING WHAT TO DO THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE WHETHER THERE IS ANY POSSIBILITY FOR PROGRESS OR WHETHER THEY WOULD HAVE TO GO TO UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND CONFRONT ISRAEL. IF THEY WERE TO APPROACH THIS PROBLEM IN A CALM, REASONED FASHION, IT WAS ESSECTIAL THAT THERE BE NO SHELLING OF THEIR FORCES. HADDAD HAD THREATENED UNIFIL THAT HE WAS GOING TO RESUME FIRING NEXT WEEK. LEBANESE HAD DEFINITE PROOF THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE BRINGING ARTILLERY PIECES INTO MARJAYOUN TEMPORARIOY AND USING THEM FOR FIRING ON LEBANESE.

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(THIS IS APPARENTLY REFERENCE TO 175 MM. GUN WHICH AIME TELLS US NORBATT SAW ISRAELIS MOVING IN AND OUT OF MARJAYOUN RECENTLY.)

2. BOUTROS ASKED THAT WE WEIGH IN WITH ISRAELIS TO GET THEM TO RESTRAIN HADDAD AND HIS MEN AND KEEP THEM FROM FIRING. HE SUGGESTED THAT WE PUT THIS TO THE ISRAELIS AS OUR OWN

SUGGESTION AND TELL THEM WE WERE ASKING THEM TO RESTRAIN HADDAD AND LEBANESE NOT TO GO TO SECURITY COUNCIL. I SAID I WOULD TRANSMIT THIS REQUEST. HE ASKED IF I THOUGHT IT WAS REASONABLE. I AID IT WAS REASONABLE, BUT IT WAS HARD TO TELL WHAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO DO.

3. IN ORDER GIVE HIM ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH WE WERE WORKING, I THEN BRIEFED HIM ON TEL AVIV'S 10254 REPORTING CONVERSATION BETWEEN COL. WILLIAMS AND EYTAN AND GAZIT. BOUTROS FOUND IT VERY INTERESTING AND ALSO RATHER OMINOUS WITH REGARD MILITIA ATTITUDES. I POINTED OUT THAT ISRAELIS WERE SHOWING WHAT LOOKED LIKE NEW FLEXIBILITY ON QUESTION OF SYRIAN MOVEMENT BELOW RED LINE IN SUPPORT LEBANESE ARMY DEPLOYMENT. BOUTROS SAID THIS WAS WITH REGARD TO ROUTE ONLY AND DID NOT PROVIDE MUCH COMFORT AS FAR AS SITUATION OF UNIT ONCE IT GOT TO TIBNIN. I SAID NEVERTHELESS MOVEMENT THROUGH QA'QA'IYA WOULD BE WAY OUT OF PRESENT IMPASSE AND ASKED IF HE HAD ANY IDEA WHETHER SYRIANS AND PALESTINIANS WOULD COOPERATE. BOUTROS SAID THEY HAD ASKED SYRIANS THIS A COUPLE DAYS AGO AND DID NOT YET HAVE A RESPONSE.

4. BOUTROS COMMENTED THAT ATTITUDES OF ISRAELIS SOUNDED LIKE THOSE OF MILITIA LEADERS IN BEIRUT. I WAS UNCANNY HOW BOTH OF THEM WERE TALKING ABOUT THEIR OWN GOOD INTENTIONS BUT THEIR INABILITY TO CONTROL THE HOTHEADS. IN THIS REGARD HE SAID PRESIDENT SARKIS, WHO WAS AN SECRET

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HONEST MAN, WAS DEEPLY UPSET BY U.S. ATTITUDE WHICH HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND. SARKIS THOUGHT U.S. WAS GUARDIAN OF THE PLANET'S PEACE AND HERE IT WAS PREPARED TO LET THAT PEACE BE JEOPARDIZED BY A FEW HOTHEADS IN SOUTH LEBANON. PRESIDENT COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY WE COULD NOT PUT MORE EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON ISRAEL.

5. I SAID WE WERE STILL WORKING ON PROBLEM AND DEPARTMENT HAD SENT NEW INSTRUCTIONS TO AMBASSADOR LEWIS TO RAISE ISSUE WITH ISRAELIS AND INSIST ON IMPORTANCE OF CREDIBLE UNDERTAKINGS FROM ISRAELI LEADERSHIP. BOUTROS COMMENTED THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE ANY FAITH EVEN IN A COMMITMENT FROM BEGIN. IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE FAITH IN ANY COMMITMENT BY ISRAELI LEADERS. THEY HAVE RELIED ON WEIZMAN'S ASSURANCES AND LOOK WHERE IT GOT THEM.

6. COMMENT. COUTROS IS GOING OFF FOR TWO DAYS TO REST. HE, ALONG WITH THE REST OF US, IS VERY TIRED. HE WANTS TO THINK OVER POSSIBILITIES FOR NEXT STEPS, AND WE AGREED THAT WE WOULD TRY TO MEET AGAIN ON MONDAY FOR DETAILED DISCUSSION. BASIC PROBLEM IS NOT SO MUCH THAT LEBANESE HAVE LOST FAITH IN ISRAELIS. THEY NEVER HAD ANY.

RATHER, IT IS THAT THEY HAVE LOST FAITH IN OUR WILLINGNESS
TO MOVE THE ISRAELIS. THEY CANNOT BELIEVE ISRAELIS ARE
UNABLE TO CONTROL THE MILITIAS AND THEY CANNOT BELIEVE WE
ARE UNABLE TO CONTROL THE ISRAELIS, IF WE REALLY WANT TO
DO IT. AM NOT SURE HOW WE OVERCOME THIS PROBLEM, BUT AM
SURE LEBANESE WILL NOT MOVE TO TIBNIN UNLESS THEY HAVE SOME
CONFIDENCE FORCE WILL NOT BE BOMBARDED BY CHRISTIANS.
PARKER

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